

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY REPORT ON PATENTABILITY
(Chapter II of the Patent Cooperation Treaty)

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

Applicant's or agent's file reference P24440PC	FOR FURTHER ACTION See Form PCT/IPEA/416	
International application No. PCT/NO2004/000288	International filing date (<i>day/month/year</i>) 29-09-2004	Priority date (<i>day/month/year</i>) 29-09-2003
International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC H04B7/185, H04Q7/22, H04Q7/30		
Applicant MARITIME COMMUNICATIONS PARTNER AS et al		
<p>1. This report is the international preliminary examination report, established by this International Preliminary Examining Authority under Article 35 and transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36</p> <p>2. This REPORT consists of a total of <u>5</u> sheets, including this cover sheet.</p> <p>3. This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, comprising:</p> <p>a. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (<i>sent to the applicant and to the International Bureau</i>) a total of <u>9</u> sheets, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis of this report and/or sheets containing rectifications authorized by this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions) <input type="checkbox"/> sheets which supersede earlier sheets, but which this Authority considers contain an amendment that goes beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed, as indicated in item 4 of Box No. I and the Supplemental Box <p>b. <input type="checkbox"/> (<i>sent to the International Bureau only</i>) a total of (indicate type and number of electronic carrier(s)) _____, containing a sequence listing and/or tables related thereto, in electronic form only, as indicated in the Supplemental Box Relating to Sequence Listing (see Section 802 of the Administrative Instructions).</p> <p>4. This report contains indications relating to the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Box No. I Basis of the report <input type="checkbox"/> Box No. II Priority <input type="checkbox"/> Box No. III Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability <input type="checkbox"/> Box No. IV Lack of unity of invention <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Box No. V Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement <input type="checkbox"/> Box No. VI Certain documents cited <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Box No. VII Certain defects in the international application <input type="checkbox"/> Box No. VIII Certain observations on the international application 		

Date of submission of the demand 26-07-2005	Date of completion of this report 19-09-2004
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INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY REPORT ON PATENTABILITY

International application No
PCT/NO2004/000288

Box No. I Basis of the report

1. With regard to the language, this report is based on:

the international application in the language in which it was filed
 a translation of the international application into English, which is the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of:
 international search (Rules 12.3(a) and 23.1(b))
 publication of the international application (Rule 12.4(a))
 international preliminary examination (Rules 55.2(a) and/or 55.3(a))

2. With regard to the elements of the international application, this report is based on (*replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to this report*):

the international application as originally filed/furnished
 the description:
 pages _____ as originally filed/furnished
 pages* 1-7 received by this Authority on 15.12.2004
 pages* _____ received by this Authority on _____

the claims:
 pages _____ as originally filed/furnished
 pages* _____ as amended (together with any statement) under Article 19
 pages* 1-2 received by this Authority on 26.07.2005
 pages* _____ received by this Authority on _____

the drawings:
 pages 1-2 as originally filed/furnished
 pages* _____ received by this Authority on _____
 pages* _____ received by this Authority on _____

a sequence listing and/or any related table(s) – see Supplemental Box Relating to Sequence Listing

3. The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:
 the description, pages _____
 the claims, Nos _____
 the drawings, sheets/figs _____
 the sequence listing (*specify*): _____
 any table(s) related to the sequence listing (*specify*): _____

4. This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments annexed to this report and listed below had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed, as indicated in the Supplemental Box (Rule 70.2(c))
 the description, pages _____
 the claims, Nos _____
 the drawings, sheets/figs _____
 the sequence listing (*specify*): _____
 any table(s) related to the sequence listing (*specify*): _____

* If item 4 applies, some or all of those sheets may be marked "superseded."

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Box No. V Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. Statement

Novelty (N)	Claims	1-4	YES
	Claims		NO
Inventive step (IS)	Claims	1-4	YES
	Claims		NO
Industrial applicability (IA)	Claims	1-4	YES
	Claims		NO

2. Citations and explanations (Rule 70.7)

The object of the invention is to reduce the audible time delay that occurs when the signals are transmitted via a satellite channel.

The problem is solved by locally switching calls between subscribers located on the same side of the base station system, and by analyzing and monitoring the capacity utilization in the transmission connection.

Documents cited in the International Search Report:

D1: US 6141531, A
D2: GB 2334179, A
D3: US 2003119512, A1

Document D1 is considered to represent the closest prior art. D1 provides a decentralized wireless communications system for voice and data communication that allows for a flexibility of communication paths, provides local communication as well as optional links to external networks, such as public switch telephone networks, satellites and radio emergency networks, does not require a centralized switching centre, provides for secure operation, allows for controlling the operational state of the internal network, provides for emergency notification and provides a way to collect revenue from the system (see abstract and claims)

D2 reveals a method involving the step of determining whether a station being called is located within the same cell, or an adjacent sub-cell, as the calling station. The cell or sub-cell is controlled by a common base station controller, and a

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Supplemental Box

In case the space in any of the preceding boxes is not sufficient.

Continuation of: BOX V

call is routed through the common base station controller, which controls the switching via the local PBX without reference to a mobile services switching centre.

Independent claim 1

The invention according to amended independent claim 1 describes a local switcher in a base station system (BSS) used for locally connecting two subscribers served by the same BSS. The invention according to amended claim 1 differs from D1 by rerouting the speech channel locally and not rerouting the signalling channel. This way the normal function of the MSC may be retained.

The cited documents fail to reveal this feature.

Both D1 and D2 describe systems for locally switching (Routing) calls from one subscriber to another where the dialled-up subscriber is located on the same BSS (cell, area). This well-known procedure is used in many mobile systems for reducing delays in the communication and for reducing the load on the mobile switching centre (MSC).

However, both in D1 and D2 the rerouting is done to the complete call by utilizing specialised purpose made equipment.

Accordingly, the invention defined in claims 1- 4 is novel and is considered to involve an inventive step. The invention is industrially applicable.

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Box No. VII Certain defects in the international application

The following defects in the form or contents of the international application have been noted:

Dependent Claim 4 should only refer to dependent claim 2 since the analyzer is not mentioned in independent claim 1 or in dependent claim 3.

METHOD FOR REDUCING THE TIME DELAY IN A TELEPHONE SYSTEM

This invention regards a method for reducing the time delay in a telephone system. More particularly, it regards a method for reducing the audible time delay that occurs when the signals are transmitted e.g. via a satellite channel. In the following, reference is made, for illustrative purposes, to a satellite connection or channel. Satellite connection is here taken to mean an entire satellite system comprising multiplexers (MUX), antennas and satellite.

In the following, reference is made, for illustrative purposes, to a GSM system (GSM - Global System for Mobile Communication) which employs a so-called A-interface between a Base Station System (BSS) and a Mobile Service Switching Centre (MSC). In conventional mobile telephony all calls are connected in the Mobile Service Switching Centre.

Under normal circumstances such a solution is acceptable, but when the BSS and the MSC communicates e.g. via a satellite connection, an audible time delay in the order of 0.5 seconds will arise.

Typically, this is a problem when the BSS is located on a ship and the MSC is on shore.

The time delay doubles when both parties are on the same side of the satellite connection, as the signals must then first

s be sent via the satellite connection to the MSC and then return to the BSS via the same satellite connection.

The object of the invention is to remedy the disadvantages of prior art.

10 The object is achieved in accordance with the invention, by the characteristics stated in the description below and in the following claims.

According to a standardized protocol for telephone systems of this type, signalling and speech are separated into two separate channels, a signalling channel and a speech channel.

15 Thus it is possible to process data transmitted via the speech channel without interfering with the signalling channel.

When two persons on the same side of a satellite connection call each other, the speech channels can be connected by use

20 of a local change-over switch or switcher, while the signalling channel is transmitted to the MSC via the satellite connection. Thus the speech channel is not transmitted via the satellite connection and therefore is not subject to said time delay.

25 Monitoring and analysis of the data stream in the signalling channel between the BSS and the MSC makes it possible to extract any data indicating that a call should be switched locally, whereupon the respective speech channels are connected locally.

A further advantageous feature of the invention is that the transmission capability requirement of the satellite connection is reduced.

An A-interface (interface) for communication between a BSS
5 and a MSC comprises a number of TDM (time-division multiplex)
connections. By concentrating the number of calls routed via
the satellite connection to a smaller number of TDM links at
the BSS in order then to expand these concentrated TDM links
to the initial number at the MSC, it becomes possible to save
10 transmission capability in the satellite connection. Thus,
TDM time slots not transmitted to the MSC can be used for lo-
cal calls.

In a conventional mobile telecommunication system the capac-
ity is determined by the total number of TDM time slots and
15 links between the BSS and the MSC.

In those cases where all TDM time slots in said concentrated
transmission connection are being used, the conventional mo-
bile telecommunication system will attempt to set up more
calls if there are any free TDM time slots for local calls.
20 The reason for this is that a conventional MSC will not be
able to keep track of which calls are local and which are
long distance calls, and in consequence, nor will it know the
capacity situation in the transmission connection.

The invention comprises a method of preventing the MSC from
25 attempting to set up further calls when the capacity of the
transmission connection is fully utilised.

The following describes a non-limiting example of a preferred
method illustrated in the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 shows the principal components of a telephone system according to the invention;

Figure 2 shows the transmission paths of the signalling and speech channels according to prior art; and

5 Figure 3 shows the transmission paths of the signalling and speech channels according to the invention, the transmission path of the signalling channel being illustrated by a broken line.

In the drawings, reference number 1 denotes a BSS of a type
10 that is known *per se*. The BSS 1 communicates with a local change-over switch or switcher 2 via a plurality of channels E1-1 to E1-n, where n is a selected number.

The local switcher 2 communicates via a transmission system
15 3, here in the form of satellite communication, with a remote switcher 4 via a plurality of channels E1-1 to E1-m, where 1 and m are selected numbers.

The remote switcher 4 communicates via a plurality of channels E1-1 to E1-n with an MSC 5 of a type that is known *per se*. The channels E1-1- to E1-n between the remote switcher 4 and the MSC 5 correspond to the channels E1-1 to E1-n between
20 the BSS 1 and the local switcher 2.

A TDM time slot monitor, decoder and analyser 6, hereinafter denoted TDM analyzer or optionally analyzer, is connected to the channels between the BSS 1 and the local switcher 2. In
25 Figure 1 this is illustrated by channel E1-1 being connected to the TDM analyzer 6.

The TDM analyzer 6 communicates with the local switcher 2 and with the remote switcher 4 and the MSC 5 by means of a TCP/IP

(Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol) connection/network 7.

The TDM analyzer 6 constructs a local database of so-called IMSI (International Mobile Subscriber Identity) and MS-ISDN (Mobile Station - Integrated Services Digital Network) number 5 for each mobile telephone associated with the BSS 1.

The IMSI number is read from the signalling message 'location_updating_accept', while MS-ISDN is obtained from the MSC 5 by making an inquiry using the IMSI number as a reference.

10 Then the TDM analyzer 6 establishes a temporary list of all subscribers attempting to set up calls, hereinafter denoted A-subscribers 8, in the MSC 5.

15 The following A-interface messages are monitored in order to obtain the required information, the nature of the information being indicated in brackets:

4. Cm_service_request (A-IMSI)
5. Connection_confirmed (logical signalling link Id)
6. Setup (MS-ISDN for B-subscriber)
7. Assignment_request (information regarding which time slot is being used).

The messages are obtained from the protocols SCCP (Signalling Connection Control Part), DTAP (Direct Transfer Application Part), BSSMAP (Base Station System Management Application Part) in the A-interface.

A temporary listing is stored in the MSC 5, which includes all mobile users to whom a dial-up is attempted, at all times, and these users/subscribers are hereinafter denoted B-subscribers 9.

5 The following A-interface messages are monitored in order to obtain the required information, the nature of the information being indicated in brackets:

8. Paging_response (B-IMSI)

9. Connection_confirmed (logical signalling link Id)

10 10. Assignment_request (information regarding which time slot is being used).

11. Connect_acknowledge (used as time of concentration for external calls).

15 When the A-subscriber receives the A-interface message 'connect_ack' the TDM analyzer 6 will make an inquiry for the B-MS-ISDN number in the above mentioned subscriber database and then check whether the resulting B-IMSI number is on the list of B-subscribers to whom a dial-up is being attempted. If the number is there, the corresponding TDM time slots are cross-connected in the local switcher 2.

If calls are not to be cross-connected locally, e.g. when the A- and B-subscribers 8, 9 are in different BSS's 1, collected TDM time link information is used to initiate the desired concentration of the TDM time links.

25 All connections of calls and concentrations of TDM time links are controlled by the TDM analyzer 6. TDM time slot informa-

tion for the call in question is used to initiate switching of TDM time slots between the TDM time links on the BSS 1 and MSC 5 side of the local switcher 2 or the remote switcher 4 respectively, and the TDM links transmitted via the satellite connection 3.

Figure 1 shows an example in which four TDM-links are concentrated down to two TDM-links. Obviously other constellations are possible.

The TDM analyzer 6 stores and maintains a list of all calls switched through the local switcher 2 and the remote switcher 4 at all times. When a call is terminated, i.e. the A-interface message 'released' is read from the signalling channel for an active call, the TDM analyzer 6 will notify the local switcher 2 and the remote switcher 4 to break the connections for the call in question.

The relaying of information between the TDM analyzer 6 and the local switcher 2 takes place via a normal TCP/IP network. Likewise, the remote switcher 4 receives information from the TDM analyzer 6 in order to extract the TDM links from the satellite connection 3 to the total number of TDM links in the system in the correct manner.

The TDM analyzer 6 is arranged so as to keep track of the status of the capacity of the satellite connection 3 and prevent further calls from being set up in the MSC 5 when all available transmission capacity is in use. This is done by using the TCP/IP network 7.

26 -07-2005

A m e n d e d C l a i m s

1. A method of switching a speech channel in a mobile telephone system utilizing a signalling channel and a speech channel, the mobile telephone system comprising an interface between a Base Station System (BSS) (1) communicating with a Mobile Switching Centre (MSC) (5) via a transmission connection (3),
5 characterised in that the speech channels of an originating subscriber (8) and a dialled-up subscriber (9), both of whom are located on the BSS (1) side of the transmission connection (3), are connected in a local switcher (2), while the routing of the signalling channel via the Mobile Switching Centre (MSC) (5) is retained.
10
- 15 2. A method in accordance with Claim 1,
characterised in that a signalling channel corresponding to a set of speech channels is monitored by means of an analyzer (6), information regarding the dialled-up subscriber (9) being analyzed
20 in order then to connect the calls in the local switcher if both subscribers (8, 9) are on the same side of the transmission connection (3).
- 25 3. A method in accordance with Claims 1 and 2,
characterised in that a number of transmission links from the BSS (1) are concentrated down to a smaller number of transmission links transmitted via the transmission connection (3), whereupon the smaller number of transmission links is expanded to the original number of transmission links
30 before they are transmitted to the MSC (5).

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4. A method in accordance with Claim 3,
characterized in that the analyzer
(6) monitors the capacity utilization in the
transmission connection (3) and prevents the MSC (5)
from attempting to set up further calls if the capacity
is fully utilized.